



**NASA
Procedural
Requirements**

NPR 3451.1C

Effective Date: December 6, 2017

Expiration Date: December 6, 2022

COMPLIANCE IS MANDATORY

Subject: NASA Awards and Recognition Program

Responsible Office: Office of Human Capital Management

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Preface

P.1 Purpose

- a. The Agency is committed to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of Government operations by recognizing and rewarding its employees for results-based performance.
- b. This directive establishes the responsibilities and requirements for the Agency's awards program based on individual and group performance results that directly support, enhance, and achieve the Agency's mission and strategic goals. It also emphasizes recognition of cross-functional activities and teamwork across the Agency.
- c. The Agency awards vision states that all awards are given:
 - (1) **for the RIGHT CONTRIBUTION**... advances the Agency's agenda to align values and performance expectations, provides organizational learning, and strengthens the relationship between employees and management.
 - (2) **to the RIGHT PERSON**... when fully deserved, to employees who meet clearly understood criteria and with full explanation of the accomplishment being recognized.
 - (3) **at the RIGHT TIME/EVENT**... in an appropriate manner, without undue delay, and of sufficient value to be meaningful.
- d. This directive includes instructions for the nomination of employees for external awards sponsored by other Government agencies and private sector organizations.
- e. This directive supplements referenced statutes and regulations. Consult your Center Human Resources (HR) for further information and guidance.

P.2 Applicability

- a. This directive is applicable to NASA Headquarters and NASA Centers, including Component Facilities and Technical and Service Support Centers. This directive applies to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), a Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC), and other contractors only to the extent specified or referenced in applicable contracts.
- b. In this directive, all mandatory actions (i.e., requirements) are denoted by statements containing the term "shall." The terms "may" or "can" denote discretionary privilege or permission, "should" denotes a good practice and is recommended, but not required, "will" denotes expected outcome, and "are/is" denotes descriptive material.
- c. This directive does not apply to rank awards or performance awards for members of the Senior Executive Service (SES), Scientific or Professional (ST) or Senior Level (SL) employees.
- d. Any reference to Center Director(s) or Centers includes the Executive Director, Headquarters Operations, and the Executive Director, NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC).

e. In this directive, all document citations are assumed to be the latest version unless otherwise noted.

f. The Office of the Inspector General has statutory independence and may create a separate award and recognition system that more effectively meets its mission requirements.

P.3 Authority

a. Performance Appraisal, 5 U.S.C., chapter 43.

b. Incentive Awards, 5 U.S.C., chapter 45.

c. Additional Step Increases, 5 U.S.C. § 5336.

d. The National Aeronautics and Space Act, 51 U.S.C. § 20113.

P.4 Applicable Documents and Forms

a. Agency Awards, 5 U.S.C. § 4503.

b. Experts and Consultants, 5 CFR, pt. 304.

c. Awards, 5 CFR, pt. 451.

d. Quality Step Increases, 5 CFR, pt. 531, subpart E.

e. NASA Policy Directive (NPD) 3000.1, Human Capital Management.

f. NASA Procedural Requirements (NPR) 1441.1, NASA Records Management Program Requirements.

g. NPR 3430.1, NASA Employee Performance and Communication System (EPCS).

h. NC 1000.11, NASA Incentive Awards Board.

P.5 Measurement/Verification

a. Centers will periodically evaluate the awards program to ensure compliance and assess trends to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the program.

b. The Assistant Administrator, Office of Human Capital Management (AA, OHCM) will conduct periodic evaluation activities for compliance and effectiveness.

P.6 Cancellation

NPR 3451.1B, NASA Awards and Recognition Program, dated June 4, 2009.

CHAPTER 1. Responsibilities

1.1 Administrator

1.1.1 The Administrator (or designee) shall:

- a. Provide overall leadership to the Agency awards program to facilitate maximum benefit for the Government through high levels of performance and productivity from individuals and groups of employees.
- b. Appoint the Agency Incentive Awards Board (IAB) Chair.
- c. Retain the authority to approve the following:
 - (1) Performance awards for employees covered by EPCS, which exceed 10 percent and are not more than 20 percent of an employee's annual rate of basic pay up to and including \$10,000.
 - (2) All non-performance cash awards (e.g., Special Acts) for SES/ST/SL employees.
 - (3) Nominations for individual awards of over \$10,000, which are subject to final approval by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).
 - (4) Nominations for individual awards of over \$25,000, which are subject to OPM review and final approval by the President.
 - (5) Nominations for external awards, as applicable.

1.2 Officials-in-Charge (OICs) of Headquarters Offices and Center Directors

1.2.1 OICs and Center Directors shall:

- a. Monitor and evaluate employee performance in accordance with NPR 3430.1, ensuring fairness and consistency in rewarding employees.
- b. Direct the awards program within their area of responsibility. Recognize employees' performance and achievement in accordance with this directive.
- c. Retain approval authority for monetary awards, including cash awards for On-the-Spot and Special Act not to exceed \$9,999 for employees covered by EPCS. Approval authority for monetary or cash awards of \$7,500 or less may be delegated in accordance with NPD 3000.1.
- d. Establish local award program procedures, guidelines, and budget (e.g., percentage/range of percentage of salary) in accordance with applicable Agency guidance. When delegating approval authority, determine approval level and upper limits (up to and including \$7,500) for cash On-the-Spot and Special Act Awards. (Center Directors only)
- e. Set guidelines and ensure oversight of special award programs, e.g., financial management award. (OICs only)

1.3 Assistant Administrator, Office of Human Capital Management

1.3.1 The AA, OHCM shall:

- a. Establish, direct, and evaluate the Agency awards and recognition program.
- b. Review requests for new external or special awards prior to submission to the Agency IAB for review and to the Agency IAB Chair for approval.
- c. Serve as the Vice IAB Chair.

1.4 Executive Director, NSSC

1.4.1 The NSSC Executive Director shall:

- a. Administer the Agency honor awards program and Agency approved external awards, including planning, procurement, logistics, execution, and close out activities in accordance with this directive and other applicable Agency guidance.
- b. Direct the development, management, and maintenance of the NASA Automated Award System (NAAS).
- c. Maintain and distribute Agency awards materials.
- d. Maintain and publish the Agency awards calendar.

1.5 Agency IAB Chair

1.5.1 The IAB Chair shall:

- a. Appoint members to the Agency IAB.
- b. Approve nominations for Agency honor awards and out-of-cycle awards.
- c. Approve special Agency-wide awards and recognition programs and external awards.
- d. Identify the host Center for the annual Agency honor awards ceremony.

1.6 Agency IAB

1.6.1 The Agency IAB responsibilities are found in NC 1000.11.

1.7 Supervisors/Managers

1.7.1 Supervisors and managers shall:

- a. Observe, monitor, and evaluate employee performance in accordance with NPR 3430.1, ensuring fairness and consistency in rewarding employees.
- b. Maintain a general knowledge and understanding of available awards in order to recognize and reward employees in a fair, equitable, and appropriate manner.
- c. Ensure that all award nominations are linked to the employee's contribution(s) and that the award is commensurate with the value of the contribution(s).

- d. Use NAAS to enter and approve all awards covered by this directive.

1.8 Center Award Officers (CAOs)

1.8.1 CAOs shall:

- a. Provide guidance to management officials on the appropriate use of awards.
- b. Process Center nominations for external Agency approved awards.
- c. Assist and advise management officials with out-of-cycle requests.
- d. Manage NAAS for the Center; ensure all awards covered by this directive are processed and approved in NAAS.
- e. Conduct and/or facilitate training for NAAS users.
- f. Conduct and/or facilitate Center-level review of Agency honor awards nominations before submitting to Agency IAB for review.
- g. Notify organizations of upcoming external awards and the results of Center and Agency-level award reviews in a timely manner.
- h. Coordinate Agency honor awards and Center-level awards ceremonies.
- i. Maintain award records in accordance with NPR 1441.1.

Chapter 2. Awards

2.1 Introduction

Management officials may recognize and reward individual or group achievement with the following types of awards: performance based, cash, honorary, time-off without charge to leave, and informally in accordance with 5 CFR pt. 451. Awards will be presented as soon as possible after the completion of the act or service for which the nomination is made.

2.2 General Provisions

2.2.1 Monetary or cash awards, including time-off awards (TOAs), may be recommended by persons outside of the employee's organization; however, all awards, with the exception of group awards, are subject to approval by the employee's first- or second-level supervisor.

2.2.2 Honorary awards, with the exception of group awards, may be recommended by persons outside of the employee's organization; however, they are subject to prior coordination with the employee's first- or second-level supervisor.

2.2.3 An employee's performance appraisal serves as the written justification to support a performance award. Other cash or TOAs require written justification that supports the award amount.

2.2.4 Supervisors or designees shall submit and approve awards covered by this directive in NAAS and ensure documentation allows for reconstruction by a third-party review. If an award is approved by someone other than the approving official in NAAS (e.g., by a panel or memo), document the source of approval in the NAAS justification field.

2.2.5 Subject to Agency financial management guidance, when a monetary award is approved for an employee at another Center, the nominating Center will make arrangements to transfer funds to the employee's home Center to cover the award (including the employer's portion of the payroll taxes).

2.2.6 An individual or group, a former employee, an employee of another Government agency, or the estate of a deceased employee are eligible for awards covered by this chapter, provided the achievement took place while the person(s) was an Agency employee.

2.3 Approval Levels and Restrictions

2.3.1 Chapter 1 in this directive provides specific delegations of authority for approving monetary awards as follows:

a. Awards that are subject to approval by the Administrator (or designee):

(1) Performance awards for employees covered by EPCS that exceed 10 percent and are not more than 20 percent of an employee's annual rate of basic pay up to and including \$10,000.

(2) All non-performance cash awards (e.g., Special Acts) for SES/ST/SL employees.

(3) Nominations of any individual cash award of over \$10,000.

(4) Nomination for any external award in accordance with this directive.

b. Awards that are subject to approval by Center Directors or OICs:

Monetary awards, including cash awards for On-the-Spot and Special Act, not to exceed \$9,999 for non-SES/ST/SL employees. Center Directors/OICs are authorized to delegate the approval of monetary or cash awards up to and including \$7500.

2.3.2 OPM regulation (5 CFR pt. 451) requires that all awards over \$10,000 be approved by OPM. Awards in excess of \$25,000 require OPM review and Presidential approval. Center HR offices shall submit these awards through the AA, OHCM to the Administrator for authorization to forward to OPM.

2.3.3 Presidential appointees with Senate confirmation, non-career appointees in SES positions, and Schedule C appointees may not receive a monetary or TOA during Presidential election periods under the restrictions set forth in 5 CFR pt. 451. This period is defined as any period beginning June 1 in a calendar year of a Presidential election and ending the following January 20.

2.3.4 A performance award based on the EPCS rating is only authorized for General Schedule (GS) employees. Accordingly, awards for performance based on EPCS rating of record are to be effected prior to an employee's appointment or conversion (either temporarily or permanently) to an SES/ST/SL position.

2.4 Performance Award

2.4.1 A performance award may be in the form of a monetary award, a TOA, or a combination of both a monetary and TOA award. A performance award is based on a rating of record of fully successful or higher and may be awarded after the rating is finalized in the Standard Performance Appraisal Communication Environment in accordance with NPR 3430.1.

2.4.2 The amount of the award is linked to an employee's performance and based upon the summary performance rating level. The performance evaluation and rating serves as the justification for the award.

2.4.3 Center Directors establish guidelines based on the annual awards budget (e.g., percentage/range of percentage of salary) for monetary performance awards for Distinguished, Accomplished, and Fully Successful performance summary ratings. Employees with a higher performance summary rating level (e.g., Distinguished) will receive a greater monetary performance award (including combined monetary and time-off), based on a percentage of salary, than an employee with a lower performance summary rating level (e.g., Accomplished).

2.4.4 These guidelines will be consistently applied to all employees covered by EPCS, unless the employee served less than the full performance appraisal period under the performance plan (e.g., a new employee or an employee who was on extended absence) or received a promotion during the appraisal period. In such cases, employees are eligible for awards; however, they will be reduced or prorated.

2.5 Quality Step Increase (QSI)

2.5.1 A QSI is a faster-than-normal step increase to reward an employee for sustained performance of high quality as reflected by the annual rating of record, in accordance with 5 CFR pt. 531, subpart E. This award should be used judiciously as it results in higher, long-term cost to the Agency.

2.5.2 A QSI may only be granted to a GS employee who receives a performance summary rating of Distinguished (Level 5) under the EPCS and are to be effected within 120 calendar days following the end of the appraisal period.

2.5.3 No other performance award is authorized in conjunction with a QSI.

2.5.4 In addition to processing a personnel action, supervisors shall submit and approve QSI awards in NAAS, in accordance with paragraph 2.2.3.

2.6 Special Act or Service Award

2.6.1 A Special Act or Service Award is a cash or TOA (or both) granted in recognition of a specific accomplishment to reward an individual or a group performance that has exceeded expectations as a one-time occurrence.

2.6.2 All civil service employees, including SES/ST/SL employees, and experts and consultants as defined in 5 CFR, pt. 304, are eligible to receive a Special Act or Service Award.

2.6.3 These awards are not based on an employee's performance rating of record. Examples include:

- a. Making a high-quality contribution involving a difficult or important project or assignment.
- b. Displaying special initiative and skill in completing a quality assignment or project significantly ahead of the deadline while maintaining quality and other task requirements.
- c. Providing outstanding customer service to clients or colleagues that is highly responsive, courteous, respectful, and exceeds expectations.
- d. Independently taking action to promote a safe working environment.

2.6.4 Centers are responsible for establishing local procedures, including the need to document the justification for the award in writing, delegations of approval authority, and any delegations to supervisors to grant an award for a specified limited amount without higher level approval.

2.6.5 A Special Act or Service Award may be granted to members of the Armed Forces, but only in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Department of Defense.

2.7 On-the-Spot (OTS) Award

2.7.1 An OTS award is a cash or TOA (or both) granted in recognition of a specific accomplishment to provide immediate recognition to a GS and a NASA Excepted Employment (NEX) employee who performs an act or service in an exceptional manner that might otherwise go unrecognized. Examples include:

- a. Performing high-quality work under a tight deadline.
- b. Performing quality short-term assignments/projects in addition to regular duties.
- c. Exercising extraordinary initiative or creativity in addressing a critical need or difficult problem.

2.7.2 Centers are responsible for establishing local procedures, which include the need to document the justification for the award in writing, delegations of approval authority, and any delegations to supervisors to grant an award for a specified limited amount without higher-level approval.

2.8 Time-Off Award (TOA)

2.8.1 A TOA is an award that takes the form of paid time off from work, without charge to leave, for performance as reflected in the rating of record or for a specific accomplishment.

2.8.2 All civil service employees, including SES/ST/SL, are eligible to receive a TOA. See paragraph 2.8.9 for special provisions for civilian astronauts.

2.8.3 TOAs may be granted in amounts of four to 80 hours for a single contribution. The maximum amount of time off granted to any individual cannot exceed a total of 80 hours of time off during a leave year.

2.8.4 TOAs are intended to recognize employees for high-quality performance or continuous improvement of a process, product, program, or service. Examples include:

- a. Making a high-quality contribution involving a difficult or important project or assignment.
- b. Displaying special initiative and skill in completing a quality assignment or project significantly ahead of the deadline while maintaining quality and other task requirements.
- c. Providing outstanding customer service.
- d. Independently taking action to promote a safe working environment.

2.8.5 TOAs should not be used when:

- a. The employee consistently has use-or-lose and/or restored leave.
- b. The employee will not be able to use the TOA within a reasonable time period.
- c. There are problems with the employee's attendance and leave.

2.8.6 A TOA does not expire but should be taken within a reasonable time period, usually 12 months of the date of the award. The employee should be encouraged and permitted to use the incentive in a timely manner. If illness occurs during time-off leave, sick leave may be granted for the period of incapacitation.

2.8.7 Centers are responsible for establishing the level of management approval for granting TOAs. Center Directors may delegate authority to supervisors to grant TOAs of up to eight hours without higher-level approval.

2.8.8 The monetary value of the TOA will be calculated and included in the percentage of salary designated for the performance summary rating level. However, for the purposes of obtaining required approval from the Administrator, OPM, or the President, the monetary value of the award will not include the TOA.

2.8.9 The following additional requirements and restrictions pertain to civilian astronauts:

- a. The Director of Flight Crew Operations at Johnson Space Center (JSC) is delegated the authority to approve TOAs for civilian astronauts returning from space flight missions.
- b. Up to eight hours of time off may be granted for each weekend day and Federal holiday that the crewmember was in space, up to a maximum of 160 hours for each space flight.

Chapter 3. Employee Suggestion Program

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 A suggestion is a constructive proposal that results in savings or an improvement to the Federal Government and/or the Agency. It poses a solution to a problem, a solution to a potential problem, or an opportunity to effect change.

3.1.2 Authorized management officials may grant an employee or group of employees a cash, honorary, informal recognition award, or a TOA in accordance with 5 CFR pt. 451 and this directive on the basis of a suggestion that contributes to the improvement of Government operations or services.

3.2 General Provisions

3.2.1 Suggestions will be submitted in writing in accordance with local procedures. Submissions will identify tangible cost savings, a higher-quality product, or a more efficient and effective work process.

3.2.2 The suggestion will include how the proposal should be implemented and estimated cost savings (including the formula used to estimate the savings) to be realized.

3.2.3 Adopted suggestions demonstrate a process improvement that saves the Government time and/or money and may include:

- a. Reduction in the cost of operations or service.
- b. Elimination of unnecessary operation or service.
- c. Improvement in the quality of operations or service.
- d. Development of new tools, equipment, processes, or procedures to accomplish the preceding purposes.
- e. Improved employee morale.

3.2.4 Any Government employee or group of employees and contractors may submit a suggestion.

3.2.5 A former Government employee or the estate of a deceased employee may submit a suggestion, provided the suggestion was based on knowledge gained while the individual was a Government employee.

3.2.6 Contractors are ineligible for cash awards. If a team that is recognized for a suggestion includes a contractor, the non-civil servant team member may receive a certificate.

3.2.7 A cash award may be awarded to members of the Armed Forces but only in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Department of Defense.

3.2.8 A suggestion, whether adopted or implemented as submitted, or in part, that directly contributes to the economy or efficiency or directly increases effectiveness of Government

operations or services, qualifies for honorary, time-off, or cash recognition awards, depending on the potential savings or profitability of the idea.

3.2.9 A suggestion can be outside the person's job responsibilities or, if within their job responsibilities, so superior that it warrants special recognition.

3.3 Award Amounts and Approval Levels

3.3.1 The amount of the award will be in proportion to the benefits realized by the Government. Approval levels for cash awards are described in Chapter 1 of this directive.

3.3.2 Award amounts can range from \$25 to \$25,000 in accordance with following chart:

Amount of Award Per Benefit	
Benefit	Award
Up to \$10,000	10 percent of the benefits
\$10,001 - \$100,000	\$1,000 for the first \$10,000 in benefits, plus three percent of benefits over \$10,000
\$100,001 or more	\$3,700 for the first \$100,000 in benefits plus 0.5 percent of benefits over \$100,000.

3.4 Suggestion Program Coordinators and Evaluators

3.4.1 Centers will establish local procedures for program administration, including a process for submitting, receiving, and adjudicating suggestions and the identification of roles and responsibilities for program coordinators and evaluators.

3.4.2 Centers are responsible for the coordination and implementation of suggestions approved for adoption within the Center that merit consideration at other Centers or other Federal agencies.

3.4.3 Suggestions approved for adoption with tangible benefits exceeding the amount authorized for payment within a Center will be forwarded to the AA, OHCM for coordination and approval.

Chapter 4. Non-Monetary Awards

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Non-monetary awards are principally symbolic in nature and may be used to recognize an individual or a group of individuals' value to the organization. Non-monetary recognition can take on many forms including a letter of appreciation, letter of commendation, honorary medals and certificates, or career service recognition awards.

4.1.2 As a general rule, appropriated funds may not be spent on awards for contractors or contractor employees. Exceptions are to be coordinated through the Office of Chief Counsel at the Centers or the Office of General Counsel.

4.1.3 Consistent with paragraph 4.1.2, when an award is proposed for a contractor or contractor employee, management officials shall coordinate the proposed award with that contractor or contractor employee's employer through the cognizant contracting officer and/or contracting officer's representative. Such awards do not constitute Agency acceptance of the contractor's performance unless stated in writing by the contracting officer. In no case do these awards or statements serve as endorsement of that contractor or its employees nor will contractors represent themselves as endorsed by the Agency.

4.2 Career Service Recognition

4.2.1 A career service recognition award and certificate are presented to all civil service employees upon completion of each five years of service.

4.2.2 Certificates of service, appropriate emblems, and appropriate length of service mementoes for 35 years and above are presented for each five-year interval thereafter.

4.2.3 Employees with 40 years or more of Federal service are eligible to receive certificates from the Administrator. Employees with 60 years or more of Federal service are eligible to receive a letter from the President. These will be requested through the CAO.

4.2.4 Eligibility for these awards is based on the total years of Federal service (including all honorable military service).

4.3 Awards Ceremonies

4.3.1 In accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 4503 and Agency financial management controls, Centers may obligate funds to serve light refreshments at ceremonies held for the honorary recognition of employees if it is determined that it will materially enhance the effectiveness of the ceremony.

4.3.2. Centers are encouraged to publically recognize non-monetary award recipients and hold at least one ceremony each year to recognize Center and Agency honor award recipients.

4.3.3 The Administrator hosts an annual honor award ceremony to recognize the Distinguished Service Medal and Distinguished Public Service Medal recipients across the Agency. Accordingly, Centers should schedule annual ceremonies after the Administrator's ceremony.

4.3.4 Ceremony expenses, including travel for participants to attend award ceremonies, are the responsibility of the Center.

4.3.5 The NSSC provides support to the Agency honor awards ceremony; Centers are responsible for local ceremony planning and support.

Chapter 5. Agency Honor Awards Program

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Agency honor awards are approved by the Agency IAB Chair and presented to individuals or groups of individuals who have distinguished themselves by making outstanding contributions to the Agency's mission.

5.1.2 The AA, OHCM publishes a complete list of Agency honor awards, along with eligibility criteria, nominating criteria, and award allocations (as applicable) annually.

5.1.3 There is a limit to the number of nominations for certain awards. In this case, the NSSC determines the number of Center allocations in accordance with Agency guidance.

5.2 Eligibility

5.2.1 Current civil-service (i.e., Government) employees are eligible for public service awards when they are recognized for service performed as a non-civil servant.

5.2.2 Contractors are eligible for Agency civil service awards when they are recognized for service performed as a civil servant.

5.2.3 Federal civil-service employees, including Agency Intergovernmental-Personnel Act appointees, are eligible for Government employee awards under the Agency honor awards program.

5.2.4 Contractors and contractor employees are eligible for awards under the Agency honor awards program when consistent with Paragraph 4.1.

5.3 Annual Call for Nominations

5.3.1 The AA, OHCM annually publishes and distributes the annual call for Agency honor award nominations.

5.3.2 The CAO distributes the call letter to Center Directors, OICs, and the JPL Director.

5.3.3 Nominations are submitted to the NSSC through NAAS.

5.4 Award Review and Approval Procedures

5.4.1 Center boards review and approve all award nominations prior to forwarding to the Agency IAB to certify that the nominations meet the required award criteria; this review includes a suitability review by the Center's General Counsel.

5.4.2 The Agency IAB consists of three expert panels:

a. The **Senior Leadership Panel**, which includes all of the Center Directors, the Headquarters Executive Director, the NASA Management Office Director, the NSSC Executive Director, and all Associate Administrators, excluding the Associate Administrator for ODEO, review the following awards:

- (1) Distinguished Service Medal.
- (2) Distinguished Public Service Medal.
- (3) Outstanding Leadership Medal.
- (4) Outstanding Public Leadership Medal.
- (5) Early Career Achievement Medal.
- (6) Early Career Public Achievement Medal.
- (7) Exceptional Service Medal.
- (8) Exceptional Public Service Medal.
- (9) Exceptional Achievement Medal.
- (10) Exceptional Public Achievement Medal.
- (11) Group Achievement Award.

b. The **Technical Panel** is comprised of the following five sub-panels:

- (1) The Scientific sub-panel is responsible for reviewing all Exceptional Scientific Achievement medal nominations and other nominations, as needed. The Agency Chief Scientist chairs the sub-panel. Members will include approximately four Center-level chief scientists.
- (2) The Technology sub-panel is responsible for reviewing all Exceptional Technology Achievement medal nominations and other nominations, as needed. The Agency Chief Technologist chairs the sub-panel. Members will include approximately four Center-level chief technologists.
- (3) The Engineering sub-panel is responsible for reviewing all Exceptional Engineering Achievement medal nominations and other nominations, as needed. The Agency Chief Engineer chairs the sub-panel. Members will include approximately four Center-level chief engineers.
- (4) The Administrative sub-panel is responsible for reviewing all Exceptional Administrative Achievement medal nominations and other nominations, as needed. The AA, OHCM chairs the sub-panel. Members will include approximately four Center-level human resources directors.
- (5) The Equal Employment Opportunity sub-panel is responsible for all Equal Employment Opportunity medal nominations and other nominations, as needed. The Associate Administrator of the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity (AA, ODEO) chairs the sub-panel. Members will include approximately four Center-level ODEO Directors.

c. The **Reclama Panel** is comprised of three OIC members who did not participate in the Senior Leadership or Technical panels. This panel conducts a secondary review of the rejected or change in category nominations at the request of a Center Director. The panel provides a recommendation; the final determination is made by the Agency IAB Chair.

5.4.3 Each sub-panel elects a recorder. The recorder serves as the administrative assistant to the Chair, acts as a liaison between the sub-panel and the NSSC, and records the sub-panel's findings in NAAS.

5.5 Evaluation of Nominees

5.5.1 The criteria contained in the AA, OHCM annual call letter is used to evaluate nominees. The sub-panel Chairs or the NSSC will instruct panel members on how to apply the medal criteria.

5.5.2 The panel members or the sub-panel recorders will document the reasons why any nominee is not recommended for receipt of the medal. These reasons will be recorded in NAAS and shared with the nominating Center.

5.5.3 The NSSC sets the deadline for any adjustments to nominations during the reclama process.

5.6 Out-Of-Cycle Agency Honor Awards

5.6.1 Requests for awards outside the annual call for nominations should be rare and based on extraordinary circumstances and include a detailed explanation of the reasons why the honor award should be presented outside of the annual cycle.

5.6.2 CAOs review all requests for out-of-cycle awards and certify that all of the award criteria requirements are met.

5.6.3 All requests are signed by the Center Director or the OIC.

5.6.4 The Agency restricts the number of certain medals awarded each year. The number of allocations for each Center is distributed along with the Agency annual call for honor awards. Out-of-cycle medals are counted; therefore, they will be deducted from the Center's annual authorized allocation.

5.6.5 Out-of-cycle requests will be forwarded through the AA, OHCM to an Agency IAB subgroup, which is comprised of three members (including the IAB Chair) for approval or disapproval. Approvals require a majority vote.

5.6.6 After successful completion of an Expedition flight mission, a written out-of-cycle request from the JSC HR Director may be submitted to the AA, OHCM for the International Space Station crewmembers and lead flight directors.

NOTE: Decision Memorandum dated November 22, 2006, signed by the Deputy Administrator, pre-approves this request.

Chapter 6. External and Special Awards

6.1 Introduction

This chapter covers external and special awards that recognize outstanding achievement and professional excellence for Agency civil-service employees. External awards are sponsored by various professional groups and organizations outside of the Agency or the Federal Government. Special awards are sponsored by Agency headquarters' organizations (e.g., Space Act, Small Business, Acquisition, and Safety).

6.2 Approval

6.2.1 External Awards. To ensure that award objectives and processes are consistent with Agency requirements, prior to being recognized as an Agency-approved external award, all new awards are subject to concurrence by the AA, OHCM and approval by the Agency IAB Chair. The AA, OHCM facilitates the approval process and provides pertinent information to the NSSC on newly approved awards.

6.2.2. Special Awards. Agency-level sponsoring organizations will obtain approval for any newly established awards from the IAB Chair.

6.3 External Awards

6.3.1 The NSSC centrally administers Agency-approved external awards. This includes maintaining and publishing the Agency awards calendar and informing Centers of nomination calls, eligibility requirements, nomination criteria and procedures, and other relevant information.

6.3.2 Center Directors may authorize participation in external award opportunities that are not on the Agency-approved list when there are procedures in place to centrally manage and administer the award process, including how the Center will solicit and accept nominations, approval levels for recommending nominations to go forward for consideration, and processes for centrally monitoring and tracking nominations and awardees.

6.3.3 Centers are responsible for travel-related expenses for employee participation at award ceremonies. Centers are generally not authorized to use appropriated funds to pay application fees, sponsor fees, or any other fees associated with external award nominations, unless specifically authorized by the Office of Chief Counsel or General Counsel.

6.3.4 Employees will consult with their Office of Chief Counsel or General Counsel Ethics counselor and obtain written approval prior to the acceptance of an honorary degree, non-monetary awards with a market value in excess of \$200, or any award of cash or an investment interest.

6.3.5 Employees who are required to file a financial disclosure will note the acceptance of any gift valued over the Office of Government Ethics' threshold on their annual financial disclosure form.

6.4 Special Awards

6.4.1 Agency-level organizations may sponsor special awards to recognize significant achievements in a particular program area. These awards are managed and administered by the sponsoring Agency/Headquarters' organization. This includes the responsibility for developing award objectives, eligibility requirements, nominating criteria, marketing, and procedural requirements.

6.4.2 Sponsoring organizations are responsible for coordinating with the NSSC for the purposes of publishing award information Agency wide and inclusion on the Agency awards calendar.

Appendix A. Definitions

Cash Award. In this directive, the term cash award is used to describe a monetary award that is not based on a rating of record, e.g., Special Act awards.

Monetary Award. In this directive, the term monetary award is used to describe either a performance or non-performance award for an EPCS-covered employee.

Performance Award. A lump-sum monetary and/or TOA, or a combination of both, that is based on a rating of record of Fully Successful or higher.

Appendix B. Acronyms

AA, OHCM	Assistant Administrator, Office of Human Capital Management
CAO	Center Award Officer
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
EPCS	Employee Performance Communication System
FFRDC	Federally Funded Research and Development Center
GS	General Schedule
IAB	Incentive Awards Board
IPA	Intergovernmental-Personnel Act
JPL	Jet Propulsion Laboratory
JSC	Johnson Space Center
NAAS	NASA Automated Awards System
NEX	NASA Excepted Employment
NPD	NASA Policy Directive
NPR	NASA Procedural Requirements
NSSC	NASA Shared Services Center
ODEO	Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity
OIC	Officials-in-Charge
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
OTS	On-the-Spot
QSI	Quality Step Increase
SES	Senior Executive Service
SL	Senior Level
ST	Scientific or Professional
SPACE	Standard Performance Appraisal Communication Environment
TOA	Time-Off Award
U.S.C.	United States Code
WGI	Within-Grade Increase